

Officials, residents scope out bridge work on Route 103 in York

Route 103 span, water main to be replaced

By **Susan Morse**

smorse@seacoastonline.com

August 12, 2009 2:00 AM

YORK — Two residents left a public site walk at the Route 103 bridge on Thursday, Aug. 6, reassured that plans for a new water pipe will not affect their properties.

The new water main will go 25 feet below the mud, under the York River, replacing the current pipe that now runs along the Route 103 bridge. The water district is doing the work because the state Department of Transportation is replacing the bridge in an 18-month-long project starting this winter.

Water District Superintendent Don Neumann is hoping to start drilling on Tuesday, Sept. 8, before bridge work begins and the cold weather sets in. The drilling will take an estimated three weeks.

Bridge replacement will close Route 103 at the site. Drilling for a new water main will not close Route 103, said Neumann.

Jay Edwards, owner of Edwards' Harborside Inn on Stage Neck Road, and Bobby McGann, who lives on nearby Rivermouth Road, stood at the corner of Route 103 and Harris Island Road, where the York Water District wants to start boring down to the mud.

Edwards attended the site walk to find out if dredging will be involved and found it will not.

Neumann said water to the area, including the Dockside Restaurant, will be shut off for two hours after midnight when work begins.

The plan awaits approval by Shoreland Resource Officer Ben McDougal, who said so far, he has no issues with the drilling. McDougal is awaiting the end of a public comment period on Monday, Aug. 17, before issuing a shoreland permit, he said.

Neumann wants to bury the pipe rather than run a new main along the bridge because it will save ratepayers an estimated \$130,000, he said. It also costs an estimated \$3,000 annually to keep the current pipe from freezing in the winter.

Test borings show the bedrock is deep and that the area is a prime candidate for the work, called horizontal directional drilling, he said.

Local company CLD Engineering is overseeing the project and Bore Tech is doing the drilling work.

There was initial concern that the boring would come up next to the Wheeler Marsh, a sensitive environmental area, said McDougal. The work will be contained to the road shoulder, he said.

Carol Donnelly, a member of York Rivers Association, has said the group does not feel there will be an adverse affect to the marsh.

The water district is also working with the Sayward-Wheeler house for an easement to this historic property.

The state Department of Transportation has received bids and plans to start work to replace the timber-framed bridge by December, according to Project Manager Jim Wentworth. Two other smaller bridges on Route 103 will also be repaired after the main bridge is finished.

Seacoastonline Link <http://www.seacoastonline.com/articles/20090812-NEWS-908120321>